



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – March 7, 2011
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Acting Commissioner Susan Frechette
Department of Environmental Protection

**Committee House Bill No. 5389 - AN ACT CONCERNING WATER TABLE
CONTAMINATION IN THE TOWN OF DURHAM**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Committee House Bill No. 5389 - AN ACT CONCERNING WATER TABLE CONTAMINATION IN THE TOWN OF DURHAM. The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) opposes this bill because it is not clear what portion of the Town of Durham is the intended study area, and the Department would like to provide meaningful information to the bill's sponsors and other interested legislators more efficiently and sooner than the date specified in the proposed bill.

There are a variety of areas in the Town of Durham that have known groundwater contamination. The bill is vague as to which site or area is intended. The most prominent area is the Durham Meadows federal Superfund site, which is overseen by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, commonly known as the Superfund program. The Superfund program protects human health and the environment by locating, investigating and cleaning up hazardous waste sites, and engages communities throughout the cleanup process. USEPA issued a Record of Decision in 2005 that identifies extension of public water as the remedy for the supply wells impacted by the Superfund site.

The Town of Durham, utilizing state funding, has prepared a Durham Water System Extension Feasibility Update, and an Environmental Impact Evaluation, Durham Water System Extension. As a result of these studies, some options have been identified for the water distribution system. USEPA is in the process of identifying funding options through the federal Superfund process.

In summary, the Department opposes proposed Committee House Bill No. 5389 but would welcome the opportunity to meet with and brief the bill's sponsors and other interested members of the General Assembly on background, status and options for cleanup at the Durham Meadows federal Superfund site and to answer questions regarding other areas in town that may be of concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at (860) 424-3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov.